

(2) Amended Claims

1. (Currently amended) A process for preparation of aerated, gelatin-containing confections comprising: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form a dry blend, wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose have similar particle sizes of less than 8 mesh; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin to form a slurry of essentially completely hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) heating the slurry sufficiently to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition, wherein the processing is effective to cause less *trans*-to-*cis* isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in prior art processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each.

2. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the concentrated sugar solution has a solids content of at least 75% by weight.

3. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the water for hydrating the gelatin is added at a temperature of less than about 40°C and the hold time is at least about 10 minutes.

4. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the gelatin and sucrose solution is heated to a temperature of up to about 75°C.

5. (Currently amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated ~~and has a particle size of less than 8 mesh.~~

6. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 5 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

7. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 6 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of about 40 mesh or less.

8. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the dry gelatin and dry sucrose are granulated to about the same particle sizes.

9. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 8 wherein the dry gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

10. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the mixture comprising mono, di and oligosaccharides was heated in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of at least 75% by weight.

11. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 10 wherein the mixture is heated to obtain a concentrated sugar solution having solids content of from 80% to 85% by weight.

12. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the slurry is heated to a temperature of at least 65°F. and maintained at that temperature, prior to subsequent processing.

13. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the concentrated sugar solution is cooled to a temperature of less than 80°C by the addition of water or an aqueous sucrose solution.

14. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 3:1 to about 25:1.

15. (Originally presented) A process according to claim 11 wherein the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1.

16. (Currently amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin, suitable for processing by a process entailing: (a) heating a mixture of mono, di and oligosaccharides in water to fully dissolve all sugar and concentrate the mixture and obtain a concentrated sugar solution; (b) cooling the concentrated sugar solution; (c) separately mixing dry sucrose and dry gelatin to form the dry blend; (d) hydrating the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin to form a slurry of essentially completely hydrated gelatin in a sucrose solution; (e) heating the slurry sufficiently to dissolve the gelatin and form an aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin; (f) admixing the aqueous solution of sucrose and gelatin with concentrated sugar solution to prepare a confection composition; and (g) aerating the confection composition; the processing being effective to cause less *trans*-to-*cis* isomerization in the gelatin than would occur in prior art processing wherein gelatin and sucrose are mixed after forming solutions of each comprising the dry blend consisting essentially of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1, wherein the sucrose and gelatin have about the same particle sizes of less than 8 mesh.

17. (Currently amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein ~~the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of from about 4:1 to about 20:1~~ gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 10 mesh.

18. (Currently amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein ~~the sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of~~

~~from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and~~ the gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of less than 20 mesh.

19. (Currently amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the ~~sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of~~ ~~from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and~~ the gelatin is granulated and has a particle size of 40 mesh or less.

20. (Currently amended) A dry blend of sugar and gelatin according to claim 16 wherein the ~~sucrose and gelatin are present in the dry blend of sucrose and gelatin at a weight ratio of~~ ~~from about 4:1 to about 20:1 and~~ the sucrose and gelatin are both granulated to a particle size of less than 40 mesh.